



March 16, 2006

Dear Community Friends;

Some time has passed since we last covered personal safety. This week's newsletter is a reminder along with some safety tips.

General Personal Safety

- Before you leave home, decide what you actually need to take with you rather than automatically taking your entire handbag or wallet out of habit. For example, if you are going to the grocery store for a few items, you can carry cash, a single check, or credit/debit card, I.D. and keys in a pocket.
- Stay alert. Scan your surroundings; make brief eye contact with those around you. Send the message that you're aware of what's going on around you.
- When you're out, pay attention to the present moment. If you are in an area that has a history of trouble, or in an area with which you are unfamiliar, maintain a mild state of suspicion. Stay alert!
- If possible, when on the street or out and about, travel with another person.
- Don't take unnecessary risks. If you feel a location or a situation is unsafe – get out.
- Trust your instincts! Don't ignore your gut feeling or early danger signals. If a situation appears unsafe, look for avenues of escape.
- Know what you're capable of doing. Are you capable of screaming, running or fighting? Have a plan! What would you do if you were attacked?
- If something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable, give yourself permission to do something about it. Cross the street or go into a store. Let someone know that you feel someone's following you, if that's what your gut tells you.
- Don't be afraid to draw attention to yourself or your situation.

Public Transportation

- Know the bus or transportation schedule to minimize waiting times at the stop.
- Avoid sleeping, cleaning out your pockets, balancing checkbooks etc. If you read, look up periodically.
- If possible, sit near the front of the bus, near or within easy view of the driver.
- Always keep positive control of your items.

Handbags, Other Bags, Purses & Wallets

- Take just what you need for the business you are doing, not everything you own. Leave most of your valuables secure at home.
- Carry keys in your pocket rather than in a purse or handbag.
- Carry your ID and your keys separately
- Don't leave your valuables (bags, purses briefcases,) unattended. We often leave them in dressing rooms, shopping carts, unlocked cars.... Always maintain positive control over your items.

On The Street

- If a robber grabs your bag, resist the impulse to play tug-o-war. If you hang on, you could be knocked down, hit or kicked and the robber will get your bag anyway.
- Keep minimal amounts of cash on you, or have a little money accessible to quickly give the robber separate from your other funds.
- Draw attention to yourself if you're in a threatened situation. Yell, shout, and scream. By drawing attention to yourself, you draw attention to the robber.

Most importantly, ***You are more important than your stuff!*** You can always get more stuff. You can't get another you. Your safety is more important than any possession.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention